

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 06381 231723Z

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ACTION FBO-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 A-01 /009 W

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P 231550Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2829

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FOR FBO, ARA AND A

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, AR

SUBJECT: EMBASSY OFFICE BUILDING, PROPERTY NO. 05102,
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT NO. 3102-212008

1. I UNDERSTAND THAT FBO WILL SOON DECIDE UNDER WHICH ARRANGEMENTS THE NEW CHANCERY BUILDING WILL BE COMPLETED. ONE OPTION IS TO REMOVE PRESENT CONTRACTING FIRM, SITRA, FROM ANY PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE PLANS. I BELIEVE THIS OPTION PRESENTS US WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF RETALIATORY ACTION, LEGAL OR OTHERWISE, THAT COULD FURTHER DELAY PROJECT.

2. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE CGT THAT SITRA HAS BUILT MANY HOUSING PROJECTS FOR LABOR UNIONS, AND THAT IN ALL INSTANCES PERFORMANCES HAS BEEN VERY SATISFACTORY. WE ALSO KNOW THAT SITRA PRESIDENT, GREGORIO CHODOS, HAS MANY CLOSE FRIENDS HIGH IN LABOR FIELDS. TO DROP HIM WITHOUT OFFERING A NEW CONTRACT RELATIONSHIP COULD UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING AT THIS POST CREATE THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED SECURITY PROBLEMS, AND INTERFERENCE WITH PRESENT SUPPLIERS, OR NEW LABOR GROUPS CONTRACTED FOR PERFORMANCE BY THE USG.

3. CHODOS MIGHT TAKE LEGAL STEPS TO REPAIR DAMAGE THAT DROPPING HIM WOULD HAVE ON HIS PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION,
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 06381 231723Z

AND SUCH LITIGATION MIGHT RESULT IN CONSTRUCTION BEING

HALTED FOR AN INDETERMINATE PERIOD, WITH RESULTANT LOSSES TO WORKERS. GIVEN DIFFICULT ECONOMIC STRAITS THAT ARGENTINA IS GOING THROUGH, ANY SITUATION THAT CONTRIBUTES TO UNEMPLOYMENT SERIOUSLY DISTURBS THE GOVERNMENT. POLITICALLY IT WOULD BE TEMPTING AND EASY TO BLAME USG AND EMBASSY FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS.

4. IT IS MY OPINION, WHICH I KNOW THE AMBASSADOR SHARES, THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT SITRA BE GIVEN SOME ROLE TO PLAY (EVEN IF ONLY FACE-SAVING) IN WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS IS MADE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT. THIS PARTICIPATION OFFERS BEST PROSPECTS FOR COMPLETING NEW CHANCERY BY JULY 1976, MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR EMBASSY TO MOVE FROM PRESENT INADEQUATE QUARTERS WHICH ARE BESET WITH SECURITY WEAKNESSES. WHAT IS PAST IS PAST. WE SHOULD NOW GO FORWARD BY USING SITRA AND CHODOS TO OUR ADVANTAGE UNDER AIRTIGHT CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS OF OUR CHOOSING. TO CUT CHODOS OFF A PROJECT WITH WHICH HE IS PERSONALLY IDENTIFIED IS BOUND TO RISK DELAYING THE PROJECT RATHER THAN BRINGING IT TO A SATISFACTORY EARLY CONCLUSION.
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